

JOINT PRACTITIONERS' ADVISORY GROUP | WORKING PARTY NOTES

Date	31 October 2024
Time	10.00 - 15.00
Location	Bloomsbury Building, London

Agenda	
Agenda Item	Information
	<p>Attendees: Annie Child, SAAA AC; Charlotte Eisenhart, NALC CE; Derek Kemp, Chair DK; Andrew Kendrick, NAO AK; Alan Mellor, SLCC; Mark Mulberry, IAF MM; Carolyn Rossiter, SAAG CR. Claire Reed, Secretariat CLR.</p> <p>Apologies: Ja'Neen Day, WALCA; Laura Deery, CIPFA; Sallyanne Jeffery; ADA.</p>
	<p>Declarations of Interest: There were none.</p>
	<p>Change of Name It was agreed to recommend to the panel a change of name to, <i>Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP)</i> to better explain what the panel is responsible for. Action: CLR to commission design of a new logo.</p>
1	<p>Terms of Reference It was agreed to recommend to the panel the adoption of the revised TORs, with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.1 (p.2) add '<i>The Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.</i>' ▪ 2.1 (p.2) amend '<i>Appendix A</i>' to '<i>Appendix 1.</i>' ▪ 3.1 (p.2) amend 'currently' to '<i>including</i>'. ▪ 5.3 (p.3) change '<i>change</i>' to '<i>charge</i>'. ▪ 7.5 (p.4) amend to '<i>Changes to wording to improve clarity are not significant changes.</i>'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9.1 (p.4) Membership of the panel, add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representative of External Auditors (appointed by NAO). ○ Representative of Internal Auditors (appointed by core members). ○ Independent Chair if appointed. ▪ 12.2 (p.5) change ‘<i>must</i>’ to ‘<i>should</i>’. ▪ Add 12.8 (p.5) Civility & Respect ▪ Add 13.2 Representatives of the core members (ADA, NALC, SLCC) have the right of veto. ▪ 17.3 (p.6) change ‘<i>made</i>’ to ‘<i>make</i>’. ▪ 8.1 (p.7) Membership of the TWG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Change ‘NAO’ to ‘<i>Representative of External Auditors (appointed by NAO)</i>’. ○ Add ‘<i>Representative of Internal Auditors (appointed by core members)</i>’. ▪ 20.3 (p.8) Change to: ‘<i>The Panel will review its effectiveness, collectively, on an annual basis and consider the need for external feedback.</i>’ <p>Action: CLR to redraft TORs</p>
2	<p>Practitioners’ Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was agreed to recommend to the panel that the Practitioners’ Guide be split into two separate documents; <i>Smaller Authorities Proper Practices</i> (legal requirements) and <i>Guide to Smaller Authorities Proper Practices</i> (‘how to’ guide for practitioners which could include explainer videos etc.). ▪ It was agreed to recommend to the panel that a consultation on the current Proper Practices be commissioned, including the proposal to require the production of a set of accounts (to be defined) as raised in Alan Mellor’s The Clerk magazine article. This will inform the March 2026 guide and will not include a consultation on changes to the AGAR. ▪ It was agreed to recommend to the panel that a funding request be made to SAAA for the commissioning of a rewrite of the Proper

	<p>Practices and new guide to the Proper Practices. Action CLR & NALC colleague to draft bid and arrange meeting with ADA, NALC & SLCC for approval before submitting.</p>
3	<p>Changes to the AGAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was noted that the current AGAR forms have become more complicated over time. It was agreed that the TWG should review the presentation and number of words on the forms and the panel should review the boxes as a first step. ▪ It was agreed to recommend to the panel that a full review of the AGAR forms be carried out to support a complete redesign prior to digitisation. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation on what should be reported on the forms. ○ What information could be collected to help identify a failing council. ○ A review of assertions against the revised Proper Practices. ○ Accessibility. ○ Collection and collation of data. ○ The use of algorithms to prevent missing documents/ mistakes etc. ○ How to authenticate signatures to negate the need for a wet signature. <p>It was suggested that ATOL and the Charity Commission be approached to establish how they moved over to digital forms and collect information. SAAA aims to launch digital forms by 01.04.27.</p> <p>Action: CLR to arrange meeting of the TWG to discuss AGAR forms.</p>
4	<p>Dedicated JPAG Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was agreed that JPAG should not have a dedicated website and that its page should continue to be hosted on the new NALC website. This will be reviewed in October 2025. ▪ It was agreed that the Practitioners Guide should have one cover design that is used by all members bodies to remove confusion and raise JPAG's profile. CLR to commission a cover design.
5	<p>Action Planning</p> <p>It was agreed that the action plan should be updated to include target dates and accountability. Action: CLR to update.</p>



Notes prepared by Claire Reed, Secretariat to JPAG, November 2024

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